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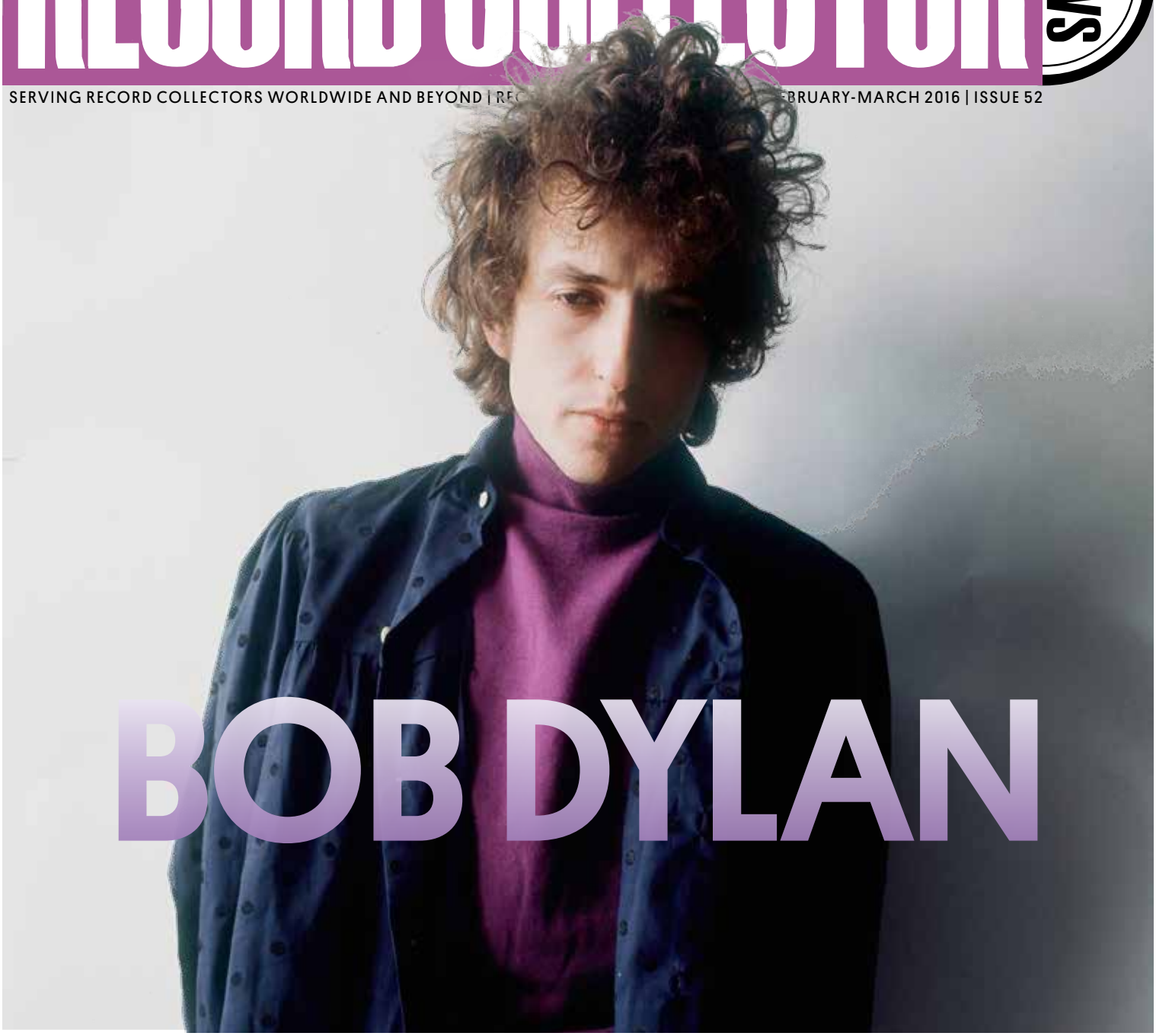

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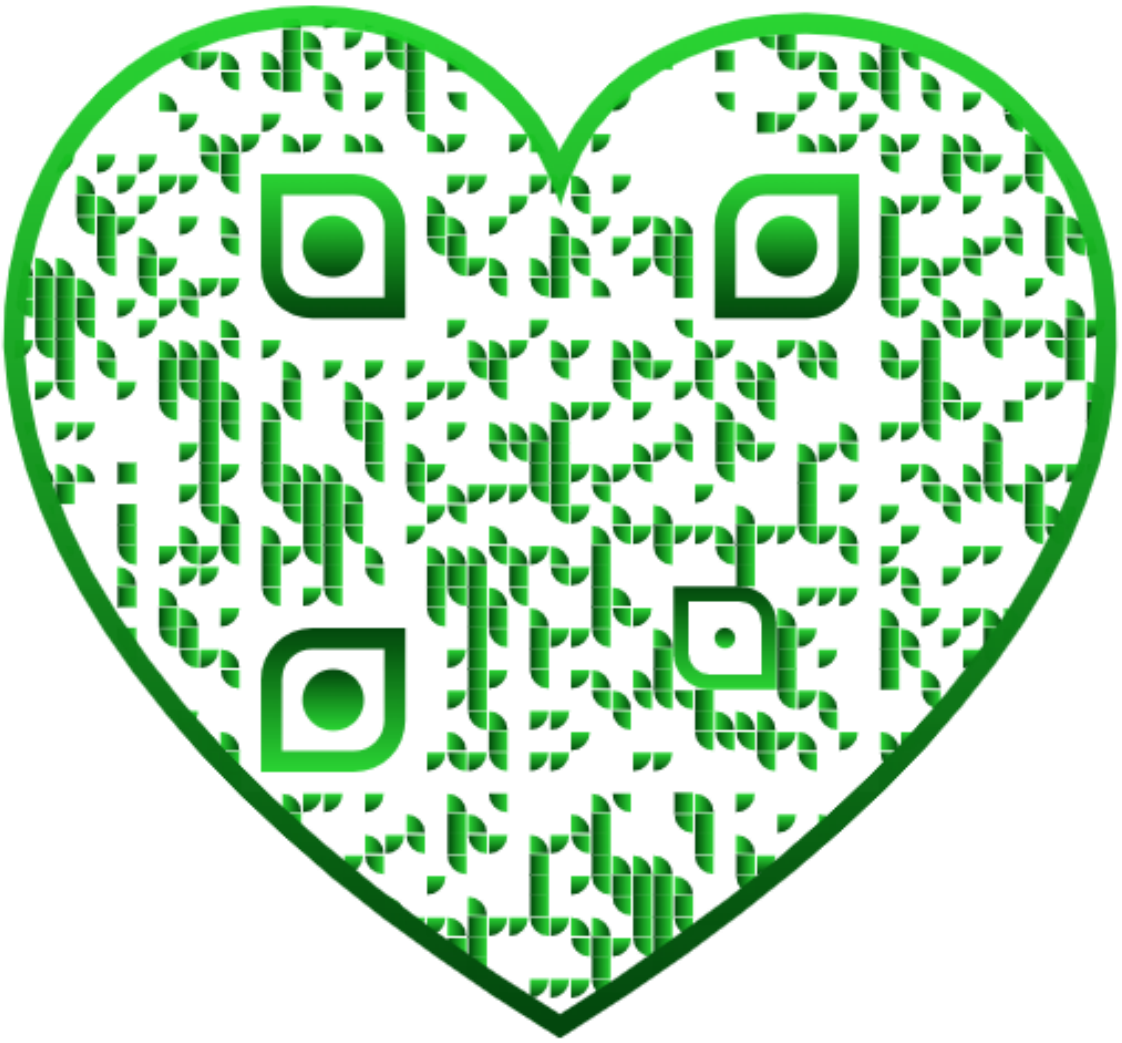

PUSHIN' TOO HARD
THE SEEDS

A ROCK DOCUMENTARY BY NEIL NORMAN

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THIS JUST IN: From Hollywood to Brooklyn, Toronto to Albuquerque, *Pushin' Too Hard*, the acclaimed rock-doc tracing the incredible rags-to-riches-to rags trajectory of 60s garage avatars The Seeds, has been enlightening and entertaining audiences at screenings across the nation. The saga of Sky Saxon and the Seeds is one of the more bizarre entries in the lexicon of rock; this movie traces a path from cutting-edge underground quartet to psychedelic emissaries who became the victims of their own flower-powered success. Using rare vintage footage, stills and ephemera to spin the tale, luminaries such as Iggy Pop, Beach Boy Bruce Johnston, the Bangles and members of the original Seeds themselves weigh in with pungent observations upon the hugely influential quartet with the minimalist style that continues to strike a resonant chord. *Pushin' Too Hard* gives you the who, what, why and wherefore of the Seeds in a jam-packed 100 minutes that the *New Times* labeled a "must see.

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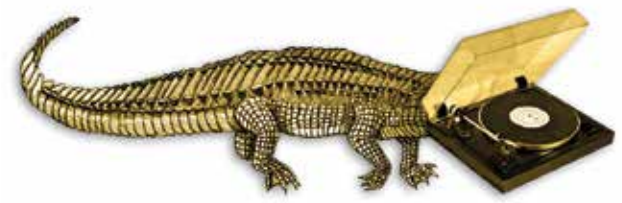

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Bob Dylan
photographed by Jerry Schatzberg

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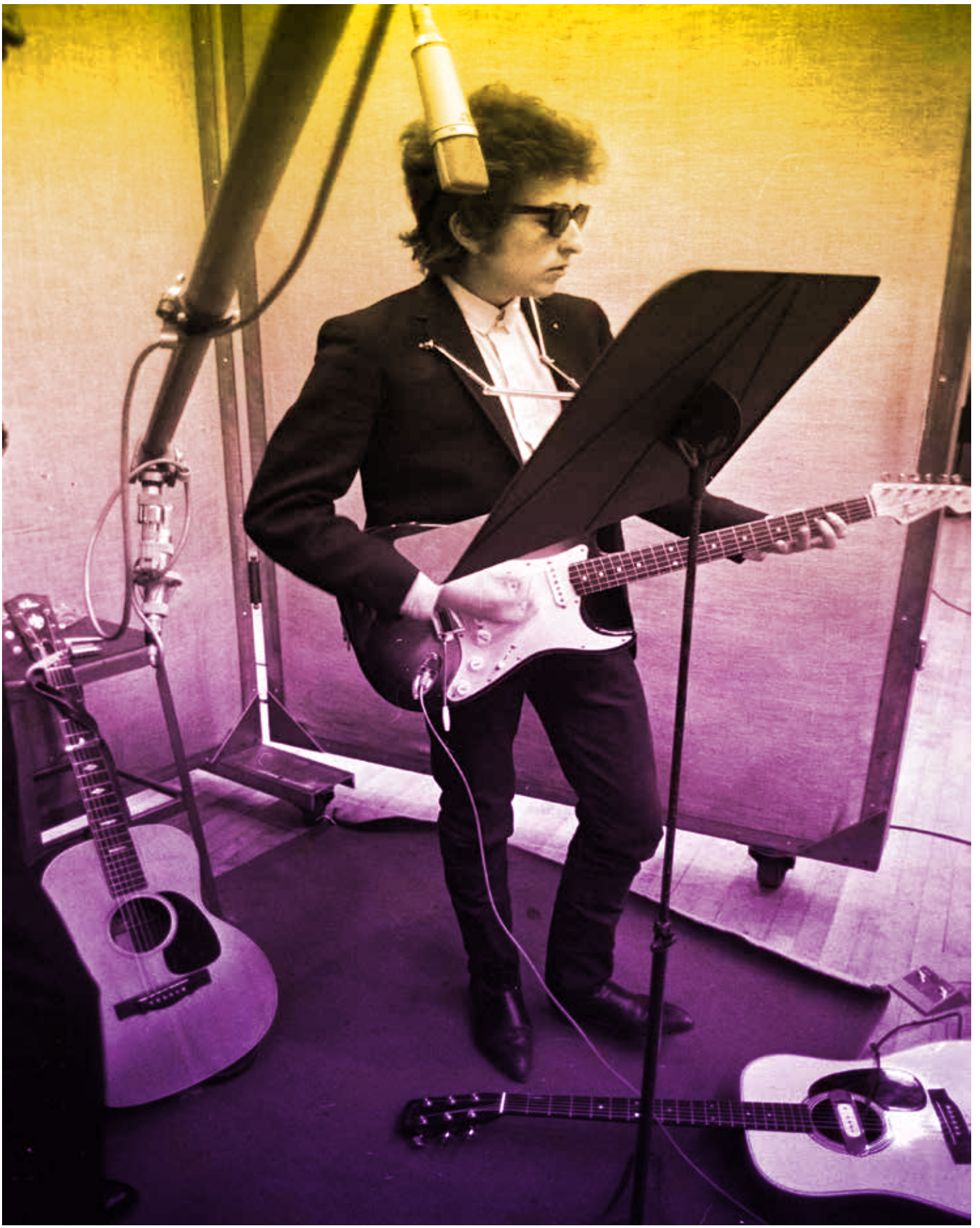

THE CUTTING EDGE

A new **Bob Dylan** bootleg CD [and vinyl] box set puts the spotlight on the recording sessions for *Bringing It All Back Home, Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde on Blond*

BY HARVEY KUBERNIK

THE LATEST CHAPTER IN COLUMBIA/LEGACY'S highly acclaimed Bob Dylan Bootleg Series focuses on the legendary studio sessions that produced *Bringing It All Back Home*, *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde On Blonde*, the trilogy of album masterpieces which secured Dylan's reputation as a songwriter and performer of unprecedented depth, power and originality while significantly impacting the course of popular music and culture. All recordings included in *The Cutting Edge 1965-1966: The Bootleg Series Vol. 12* are pristine transfers and mixed from the original studio tracking tapes.

Released this past November, this 2015 Dylan product provides a rare exploration into his creative process in the studio, allowing hardcore fans and consumers to truly experience another side of Bob Dylan through the evolution of his songs from this groundbreaking period.

This latest retail collection brings together for the first time many of the most sought-after recordings of the entire Dylan canon. Here, across six CDs, are previously unheard Dylan songs, studio outtakes, rehearsal tracks, alternate working versions of familiar hits — including the complete "Like A Rolling Stone" session — and more.

The Cutting Edge 1965-1966: The Bootleg Series Vol. 12 is available in a 2-CD or 3-12" vinyl LP set and brings together some of the musical high points of the deluxe and super-deluxe units.

An 18-CD Collector's Edition of the package has been issued and available exclusively on bobdylan.com.

Limited to a worldwide pressing of only 5,000 copies, this 18-CD edition incorporates every note recorded during the 1965–1966 sessions, every alternate take and alternate lyric. All previously unreleased recordings have been mixed, utilizing the original studio tracking tapes as the source, eliminating unwanted 1960s-era studio processing and artifice.

The 18-CD edition includes Dylan's original nine mono 45 RPM singles released during the time period, packaged in newly created picture sleeves featuring global images from the era. The limited edition houses rare hotel room recordings from the Savoy Hotel in London (May 4, 1965), the North British Station Hotel in Glasgow (May 13, 1966) and a Denver, Colorado hotel (March 12, 1966) as well as a strip of original film cell from director D.A. Pennebaker's Don't Look Back.

It also comes with an annotated book featuring hundreds of rare and never-before-seen photographs and memorabilia and new essays penned especially for the collection by Bill Flanagan and Sean Wilentz.

In 2014, Dylan's *The Basement Tapes Complete: The Bootleg Series Vol. 11*, a six-disc chronicle of his 1967 sessions with the Band, earned a 2015 Grammy nomination in the Best Historical Album category.

Generally regarded as three of the most important and influential albums of the golden era of '60s rock, *Bringing It All Back Home, Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde On Blonde* (a double album) were written and recorded across a span of merely 14 months (from January 1965 through March 1966)

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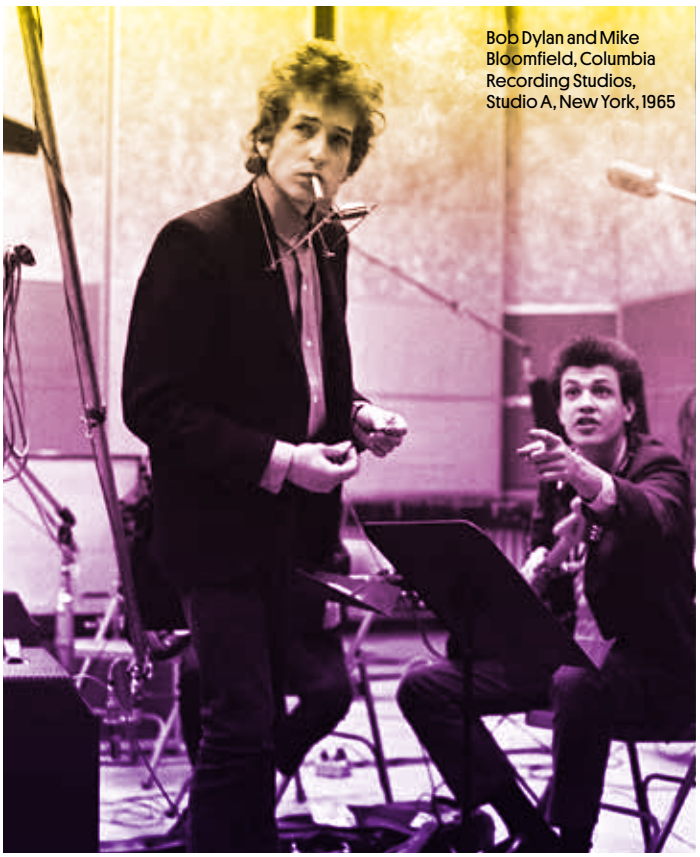
with producers Tom Wilson (*Bringing It All Back Home*, "Like A Rolling Stone") in New York and Bob Johnston in New York (*Highway 61 Revisited*) and Nashville (*Blonde On Blonde*).

"On the day Dylan stepped into the studio to begin the sessions documented, he had spent less than three weeks (20 days) working in a recording studio during his 24 years on earth," reinforces filmmaker Michael Hacker.

"Every generation falls in love with itself — their fashion, their politics (or lack thereof), their drugs, their movies - but nothing defines its sense and sensibility like their music," declares author Kenneth Kubernik. "And, like the 'never ending tour,' the never-ending debate over which decade can lay claim to having the hippest sounds marches on like a May Day parade, lockstep, impervious to reason, impassioned and ultimately irreconcilable. But I'll be goddamned if anyone is ever going to convince me that was or will ever be a more transcendent moment in music than the whip crack downbeat introducing 'Like A Rolling Stone' to a cohort of anxious ears fine-tuned to their AM radios in the summer of '65.



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Bob Dylan and Mike Bloomfield, Columbia Recording Studios, Studio A, New York, 1965

AL KOOPER

In 2001 and 2013 I talked to Al Kooper about his 1965 and '66 recordings with Dylan.

Q: Talk to me about guitarist Michael Bloomfield.

A: Well, Michael [Bloomfield] and I met on the 'Like A Rolling Stone' session. I had read about him in *Sing Out Magazine*, and saw a picture of him where he looked a little more rotund then he was when I met him. His brother says he was a fat kid growing up. So we met on the 'Like A Rolling Stone' session and really hit it off. So we played together on that.

"I was supposed to play guitar on that record. I packed up my guitar when I heard him warming up. It never occurred to me that somebody my age, and my religion could play the guitar like that. That was only reserved for other people. It never even occurred to me that that was an option for someone my age and my color. I had never seen that, or heard that up to that day.

Q. And you brought bassist Harvey Brooks into that session as well.

A. That's right. So, that pretty much ended my guitar playing by and large. I said, 'well OK, he's as old as me and he can play like that. I'm never gonna be able to play like that. Thank you, goodbye.' And, you know, I ended up playing organ on that record, and then I became a keyboard player really that day. So, it was a damn good thing because, you know, that was competition I couldn't deal with.

Q: I think the star, or the secret sauce of the Highway 61 Revisited *and* Blonde On Blonde *sessions was Paul Griffin. I know he was on some records by Garnet Mimms and on Chuck Jackson's "Any Day Now."*

A: A big influence on me as well! Paul Griffin came from the Baptist church. On *Highway 61* we did the tracks to 'Tombstone Blues' and 'Queen Jane Approximately' in one day.

"The best thing I can say about Paul Griffin is take five minutes out of your busy day and get a time where you have nothing to bother you at all. Find a real nice stereo system and sit back and put on 'One Of Us Must Know' from *Blonde On Blonde*. And just listen to the piano...And tell me if you can find on a rock 'n' roll record anybody playing better than that. And I would really like to hear what your decision is. To me it is the greatest piano achievement in the history of rock 'n' roll. I don't hear anything than him playing the piano when I hear that record. And I'm thrilled that I'm playing organ but I'm embarrassed. And I think that Dylan should be embarrassed too. 'Cause Paul just steals that fuckin' record. It's the most incredible piano playing I've heard in my life. If you're a piano player try playing that note for note. It's just incredible.

I played the organ on 'Like A Rolling Stone.' Paul Griffin on piano was so brilliant. He plays amazing things. And the thing that is really eye-opening about it, are the drums. Bobby Gregg, who had a hit record with 'The Jam.' Besides Michael's playing, you can really hear the drums of Bobby.

Q: What is so unique about Bob Dylan's piano playing?

A: No one talks about his piano playing because they don't know. Bob had a very unusual way of playing in that he didn't use his pinkies. So both his pinkies were up in the air when he played the piano. And very interesting to me. It was very interesting looking to watch that. I used to really kick a kick of that.

"The other thing was, by then, we were friends. We had spent a lot of time together. Off hour time together. Just sitting around bars and shit like that. Going to the movies and all this kind of stuff, so it was a much more comfortable situation and Robbie Robertson came to. Robbie and I split a room together. So Bob brought Robbie and I for his comfort level, rather than just go in there cold. You know what I mean?

ROBBIE ROBERTSON

For a March 1976 Crawdaddy! *magazine cover story, I interviewed the Band's Robbie Robertson. I asked him about his playing guitar with the group and recording and touring with Bob Dylan.*

"It was an unusual time which caused all those songs to be written. We know the technique very well. We've been playing with Bob for years. There's no surprises involved.

There was a thing that happened between Bob and the Band that when we played together that we would just go into a certain gear automatically. It was instinctual, like you smelled something in the air, you know, and it made you hungry. (laughs). It was that instinctual. And the way we played together was very much that way.

"I play as much as I want to play. No one is telling me, 'Listen, you're playing too much.' That's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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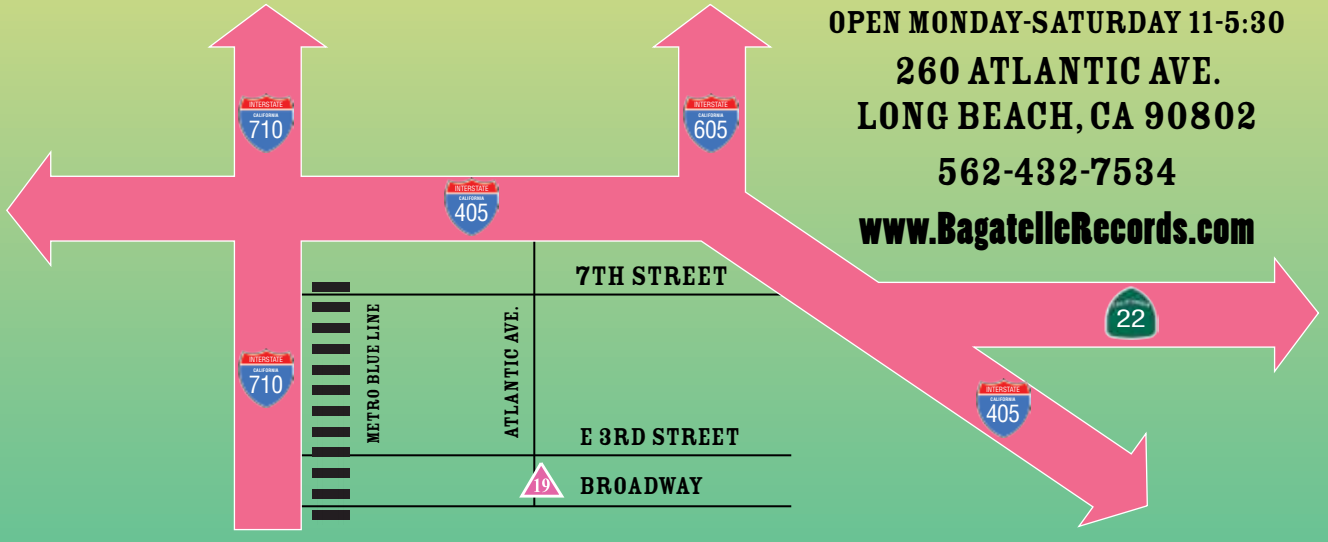

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my own decision. That's how much I prefer to do. When I hear other people play a lot more than required I find it really drivel and there's nothing in this fuckin' wide world that's going to do anything for the song. I don't care. I like a good guitar part where it adds something, has a nice place and is a nice solo. Not too much, not too little. But I think as times goes on it just takes different proportions, and too much is unnecessary."

Robertson's guitar theory seems to simply extend his basic life philosophy of unhurried discipline.

Or, as Bob Dylan said, when he called to talk about Robbie: "Listen to his guitar playing. That's all you have to know about him."

JERRY SCHATZBERG

Jerry Schatzberg's cover photograph for *Blonde on Blonde* must have worried a lot of squares at Columbia Records. I'm pretty sure it was the first "rock" album not to have the artist's name or the album's name printed anywhere on the front or back — the cover has virtually no printing at all. Dylan's face became the "word" on the cover. If you know the word, you're in...

Furthermore, this was the first time to my knowledge that an album cover photo was deliberately out of focus.

Photographer and multi-media artist Jerry Schatzberg was born in New York and attended the

University of Miami. His fashion photo portraits were published in *Vogue, Esquire, Glamour, McCalls* and *LIFE* magazine.

In the late 50s and during the 60s, Schatzberg would photograph LaVerne Baker, Eric Dolphy, the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, the Beatles, Andy Warhol, Roman Polanski, Fidel Castro, Jimi Hendrix, Mama Cass Elliot, Wilson Pickett, Faye Dunaway, Andrew Loog Oldham, Steve McQueen, Arlo Guthrie, Aretha Franklin, Chico Hamilton, Francis Copploa and Frank Zappa.

He directed some television commercials before he made his debut as a movie director in 1970 with *Puzzle of a Downfall Child*. His second directorial job was *The Panic in Needle Park*, starring Al Pacino followed by Scarecrow, co-starring Pacino and Gene Hackman. His storied film career is well documented.

In 2006, Genesis Publications published *Thin Wild Mercury Touching Dylan's Edge*.

Jerry Schatzberg and Harvey Kubernik Interview

Q: Comments people have given you over the years about the front cover of Blonde On Blonde.

A: Everybody was trying to figure out what kind of drug trip we were trying to portray since it was out of focus. Nothing to do with that. It was January. Dylan had on a light jacket and I just had on a light jacket and a number of the images while we were moving around were moving, you know. So they were blurred a little bit. I must say Dylan chose that one and I was delighted. I knew there are a number of other good images from that shoot that were quite good which I use now. For

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a while I used just the B*londe On Blonde* cover. But now, at shows and different places, I show them. They are quite good and absolutely sharp. But people thought we were trying to say something more than what we were.

I think any photographer that photographs another person tries to capture that person as best he can. By this time I knew Dylan quite well. I'd been photographing him for about a year. We'd hang out together and go places. When you're in that kind of a relationship you are getting into somebody's soul.

That is one thing. A lot of people want to know where it was photographed. To the best of my recollection it was a meat packing district in Manhattan which I had gone over a number of times to find out exactly where and it just doesn't exist anymore. So it was either a building that was torn down or totally surfaced and I have no idea. Sony is now in the process of doing a search on a number of albums and where

they were shot in New York. Two weeks ago we went down to the meat packing district with a camera crew and Sony looking for it. But we found a couple of places they might have. I liked the meat-packing district in contrast to Dylan. I felt that would be a good place to shoot.

Q: Did Dylan translate differently in your black and white photographs as opposed to color sessions?

A: It's the same guy. It's me photographing Bob Dylan. The first set of photographs I took of him were in 1965 in the recording studio with a Nikon. In color I used a Hasselblad camera.

"I had asked Al Aronowitz who was in my studio who was talking to a disc jockey that I knew and I was probably photographing somebody. My ear heard them say, 'Dylan, I saw him yesterday. I'm quite friendly with him.'

"I said, 'Hey. The next time you see him tell him I'd like to photograph him.' The next day I got a call from his wife Sara. Who I knew before she even knew him. She was the one who kept telling me about Bob Dylan. Sara said to Bobby that I would like to photograph you' and he said 'OK.' And I replied, 'I'd love too.' She gave me the address where they were recording 'Highway 61 Revisited'

"Next day I went over and was welcomed. He even let me hear some of the sides they were doing and comment on it. I must say I was a little intimidated at first but they really made me quite at home.

Q: Was the work presented that potent to you at the time of the sessions? You had shot a lot of people for Vogue *and* LIFE *previously.*

A: I think it was Dylan. I had photographed a lot of people.

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The Duke of Windsor when he was once the King of England. I don't have to be intimated by anybody.

"But, you know, when you come across a talent like Dylan...I didn't catch on to him at the beginning. I was listening to him and it was Sara and Nico from the Velvet Underground they kept yelling, 'Genius.' I was very impressed what I heard and what he was doing. He was funny. We used to go to my club, Ondine's. I was a stock holder, sit at the bar and hang out.

Q: It seems Dylan really knew the power of imagery and photographs in the media.

A: You're right. Because the first shoot was during the Highway 61 recording studio and, of course, that's his kingdom. He could do anything he wants because he's comfortable there. He was also comfortable around me because of Sara and Al.

I got the photographs in and wanted them to like them and they did. And that's when I wanted to get him into my studio where I had more control. And once he came to my studio, there was nothing he'd say no to, basically.

I'd find a prop that I might have used in a previous photograph, I'd give it to him and he'd do something with it. He was just very cooperative and he felt at home too.

My studios and film sets are always that way. I want people to feel comfortable and I want them to do something usually a little bit different from what they do in real life. I make them comfortable and they do it.

Harvey Kubernik has been a music journalist for over 44 years and is the author of eight books, including: Turn Up the Radio! Rock, Pop, and Roll in Los Angeles 1956–1972, Leonard Cohen: Everybody Knows and Neil Young, Heart of Gold.. Harvey and Kenneth Kubernik wrote the text for photographer Guy Webster's first book for Insight Editions published in November 2014. Big Shots: Rock Legends & Hollywood Icons: Through the Lens of Guy Webster. [Introduction by Brian Wilson].

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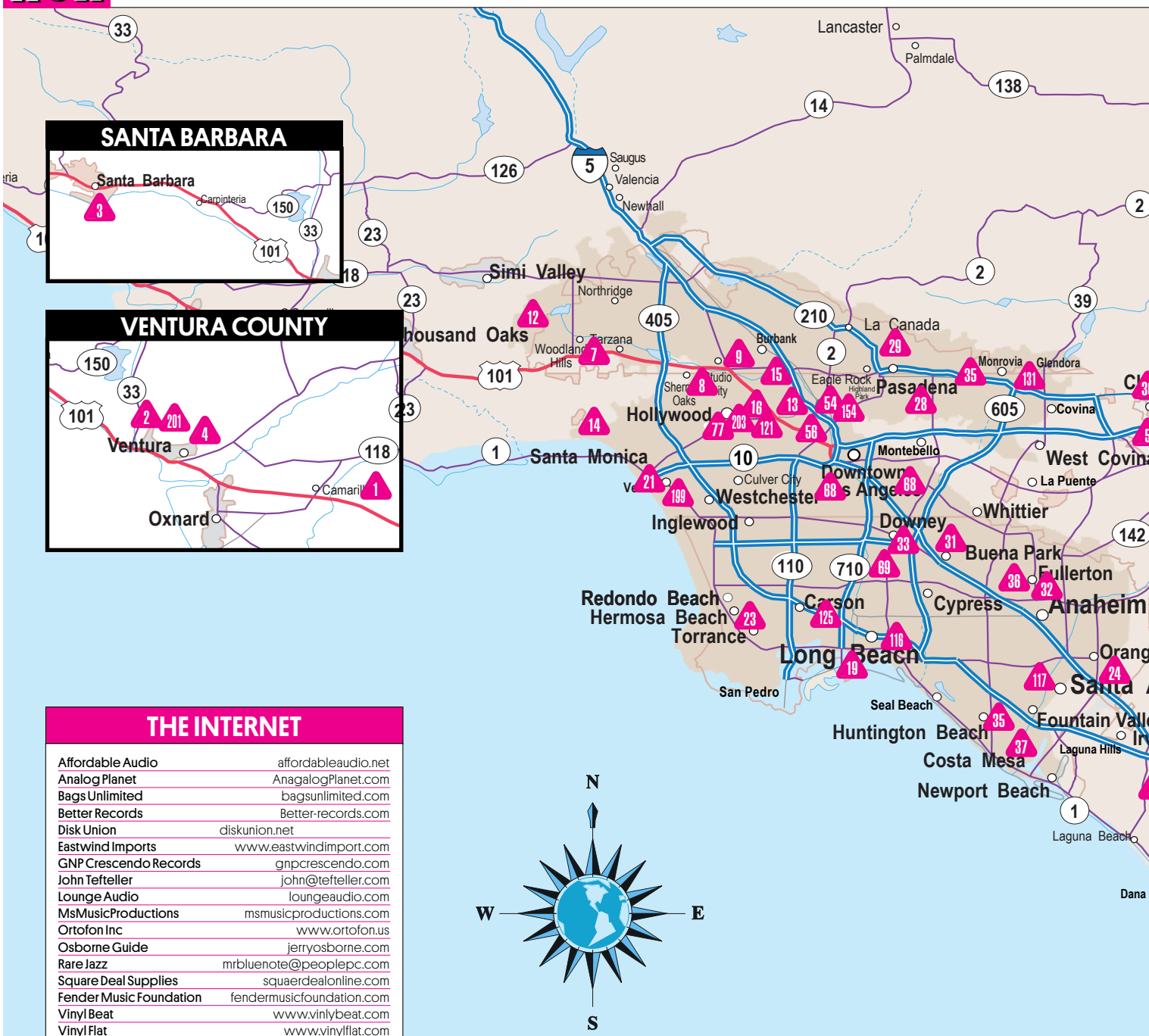

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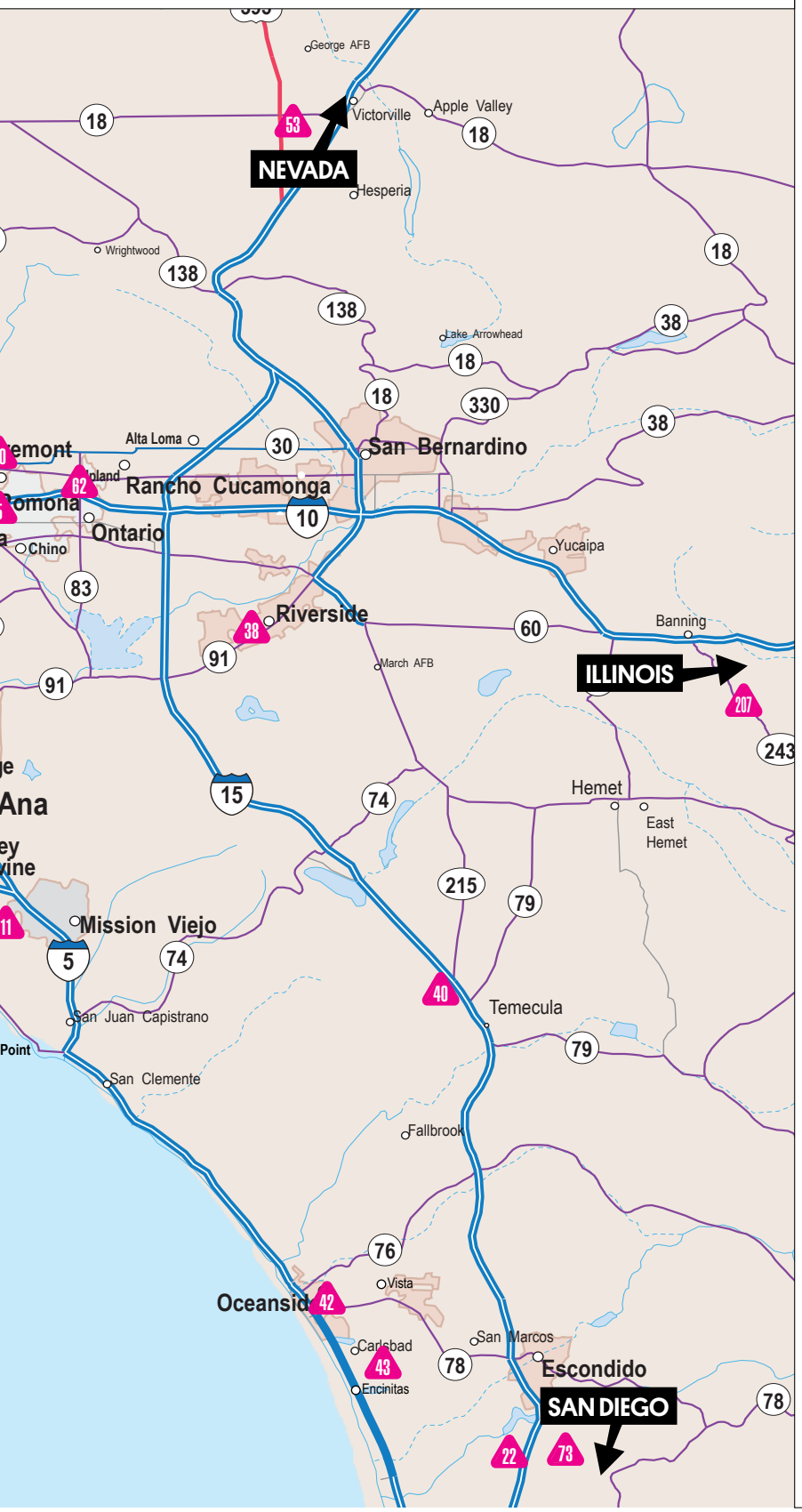

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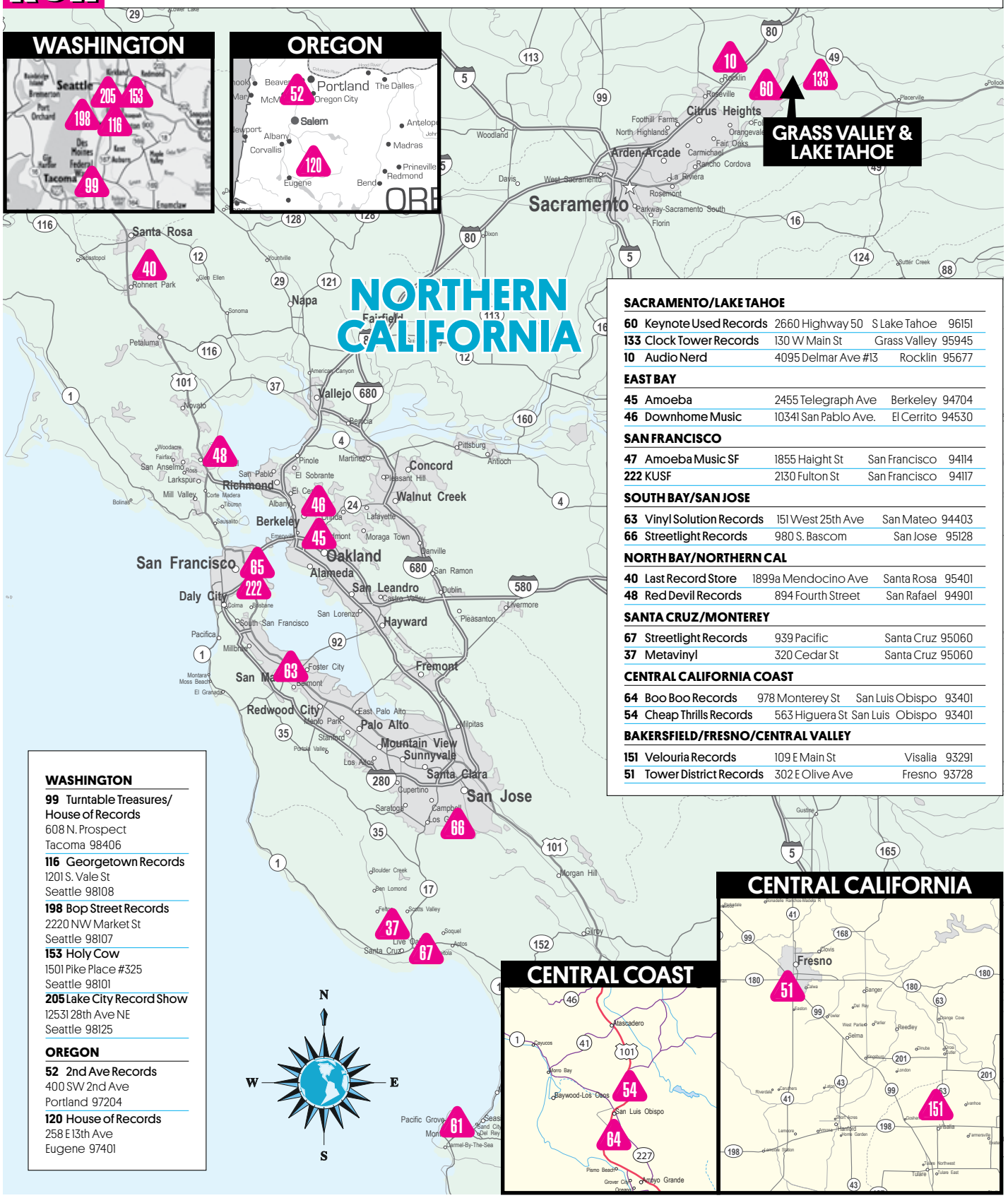
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Remastered by Grammy-award winning engineer, Pete Reiniger, from original analog tapes

8-pg custom booklet with lyrics and notes

12" x 12" original art print from New York-based artist McKenzie Nelson

WHY THIS RECORD?

THE STORY OF WHY WE PICKED THIS RECORD started almost a year ago. We found out the legendary Smithsonian Folkways label was considering a push back into vinyl and as soon as we heard about it we knew we wanted to work with them in one way or another. Their timeless pressings are to record collectors what my mom's holiday Jello casserole was to the younger me which is to say both irresistible and irreplaceable. Looking through their catalog was like opening up a time capsule, but instead of finding a tube of 80's Crest toothpaste and a Walkman we found some of the best artists and albums you (maybe) have never heard of and which had a fundamental role in shaping American music.

Given all the possibilities, the choice was overwhelming. I mean, in many ways there were no wrong choices, but we wanted to make sure we found something that was particularly influential and important. After quite a bit of searching and a few debates in the office, we settled on Big Bill Broonzy as the artist we knew we wanted to feature. He was just too damn good and too damn important not to... and that album cover. He was (and is) one of the most important Blues guitarists and singers ever. And we mean ever, like, ever ever. And Big Bill Broonzy Sings Folk Songs is certainly one of his best albums, hands down. It's also one of the best introductions to the breadth of his talent. We hope you enjoy this record, and that you take the time to sit and listen closely to one of America's greatest musical talents of all time. They quite literally don't get much better than this.

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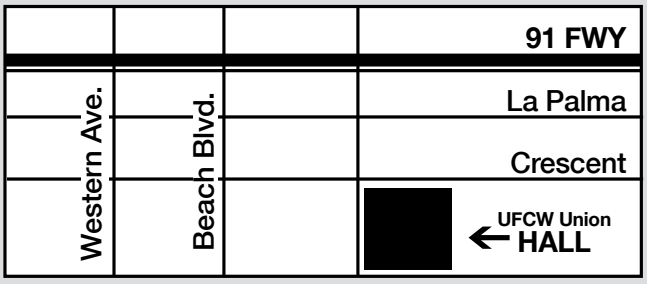

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND

With four CDs and 42 songs, *The Complete Matrix Tapes* is a vital anthology of one of the finest rock bands at their best

BY RICHIE UNTERBERGER

ON NOVEMBER 11, 1969, THE Velvet Underground began a series of shows at the small Matrix club in San Francisco, playing there most nights over the next three weeks. Tapes made of their Matrix performances formed the basis of the 1974 double-LP 1969 *Velvet Underground Live*, which gets my vote for the greatest rock concert album of all time. With fabulous, committed performances of many of their greatest songs — many of which differ in substantial and fascinating ways from the studio versions — it could not be bettered as a document of the band at their onstage peak.

For years, it's been known that much more material was recorded than appeared on that double album. With *The Complete Matrix Tapes,* it's all here. Four CDs; 42 songs; four and a half hours. It's a wealth of riches that was unimaginable back in 1974, when even the appearance of a double live LP by a cult band that never sold many records was something of a miracle. As much as John Cale gave to the band when he was in the VU from 1965-68, the late-1969 lineup (with Doug Yule in Cale's place on bass and organ) was just as powerful in a more conventional rock fashion. The Matrix shows arguably represent the band at their best in a live setting, Cale's time in the band included.

The Velvet Underground, 1968

Like many recent box sets that seemed like fantasies in the twentieth century, *The Complete Matrix Tapes* nonetheless isn't as overwhelming as it might have been had it appeared twenty or even ten years ago. Just nine of the tracks were previously unreleased in any form, with quite a few having first officially surfaced just last year on the super-deluxe expanded edition of the Velvets' third album. It's not quite an expanded version of *1969 Velvet Underground Live*, either, since that double LP had a few songs recorded in Dallas on October 19, 1969 that don't appear here.

So it's still an expensive pain to get everything from 1969 Live and *The Complete Matrix Tapes* if you're building from scratch. Many VU fans who've been aboard their cult for years will already have well over half of the tracks. In this set's favor, the six performances that were only previously available as part of *Bootleg Series Vol. 1: The Quine Tapes* boast significantly better sound quality here. (The documentation about these tracks, incidentally, is quite confusing; all but one were given entirely different dates on the track listings for *The Quine Tapes*.)

Of the nine previously unreleased performances, the clear highlight is "version 1" of "Sweet Jane." Taken even slower and more

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deliberately than the quite exquisite *1969 Live* version, it's one of the tunes that benefits from new lyrics, introducing different verses about going down to the river; dallying with characters named Billy, Jimmy, and Miss Ann; and getting offered movie stardom by an orange-dressed lady driving a maroon car. It's another testament to Reed's abilities as a poet-preacher of sorts, making up stories as they come to him right at the mike.

Some of the other new cuts are merely similar or slightly inferior renditions of songs that were already out in Matrix renditions. It's good to be able to hear the lyrics enunciated more clearly in versions 2 and 3 of "There She Goes Again," though. And version 3 of "Some Kinda Love" has one of Reed's always-entertaining introductions: "This is a song about two people who've been drinking for a very long time, and get into one of those conversations where you arrive at a fairly obvious thing... one of the premises they start from is that no kinds of love are better than others. You know, some people think that some kinds of love are better than others. But these two people don't. And one of them's boring." Then he laughs along with the tiny audience.

Still, even if you're a massive Velvet Underground fan, listening to all of this at once might leave you with an unexpected revelation. Which is: *1969 Velvet Underground Live*, though only about 40 percent the length of *The Complete Matrix Tapes*, is an appreciably better listen. This

Doug Yule [left] and Richie Unterberger, author of *White Light/White Heat: The Velvet Underground Day-By-Day*, appeared at the Seattle Central Library.

isn't the VU's fault, but an inevitable consequence of recordings that add up to 42 tracks, but feature just 23 songs. So almost half of them are presented in multiple versions—two, three, and (in the cases of "Some Kinda Love," "We're Gonna Have a Real Good Time Together," and "Heroin") even four times. Sure, no two performances were exactly the same. But some were fairly alike, and four discs at once clogged with multiples doesn't allow as much space for savoring each song.

In addition, *The Complete Matrix Tapes* also, probably unintentionally, makes it striking how astute Mercury A&R man Paul Nelson's selection of versions for *1969 Velvet Underground Live* (with some help from singer-songwriter Elliott Murphy) was. By my reckoning, no mistakes were made in the choices of best versions; if they weren't clearly the best, they were at least ties. Take, for instance, the two versions here of "White Light/White Heat." The slightly longer one (tagged as "Version 1") is just too fast and jittery, though cool to hear if you're used to the one that's been around forever. The one familiar from *1969 Velvet Underground Live* (here identified as "Version 2"), however, is not only better from any angle, but about as good as anything they ever recorded, with a masterful balance between the sardonically sung verses and the long, edgy guitar solos.

Be aware, too, that as mentioned earlier, the *1969 Live* tracks recorded in Dallas are missing. That means you don't get the classic introductory rap to "I'm Waiting for the Man" about getting comfortable, staying up late, and having just seen the Cowboys maul the Eagles. Most keenly felt is the absence of "Femme Fatale," sung by Reed with wonderful sensitivity on the *Dallas 1969 Live* version. For some reason, "Femme Fatale" was not performed or taped on these nights at the Matrix, and is not represented at all on *The Complete Matrix Tapes*. (Nor, in a lesser loss, is "I'll Be Your Mirror," sung by Yule in a too-faintly recorded vocal on *1969 Live*.)

Let's say, however, that you haven't heard *1969 Velvet Underground Live* or any of the material on this set. It still comes across as a significant collection, with considerably different arrangements of major songs from their debut LP, *The Velvet Underground & Nico*. As for numbers that didn't make it onto *1969 Live*, it's particularly exciting to hear "The Black Angel's Death Song" and "Venus in Furs" with demonic swirling organ. Lou's intro to "The Black Angel's Death Song" is quite illuminating too: "This is a song we haven't done in a really long time, 'cause it used to empty clubs. As a matter of fact, when a club wanted to close for a while, they used to get in touch with us and ask us to play this song." Then he warns the crowd that it "goes very very fast, so you probably won't be able to understand any of the words." By illustration, he speed raps a few spoken lines before the song actually gets underway. "So if you can keep up with it, we can too," he concludes.

Their second LP, *White Light/White Heat,* is less heavily represented, though the title song is thoroughly reinvented from its much shorter, piano-based verse, becoming a guitar-powered tour-de-force that exceeds the comparatively threadbare studio version in every aspect. But at

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nearly 37 minutes, "Sister Ray" drags out more than it should. For all the effort they put into making it an in-concert epic—and there are quite a few long versions of this sort, if you count bootlegs—the razor-sharp 17-minute one on *White Light/White Heat* remains by far the best. The recording on *The Complete Matrix Tapes*, by the way, suddenly gets a lot tinnier four minutes before its finish. Did the tape run out, and was some splicing done with the *Quine* recording?

Over half of the songs from their third album (*The Velvet Underground*, released about eight months earlier in 1969) are here. As good as that record was, these versions are usually better, and certainly more energetic than the notably muted, restrained studio counterparts. "What Goes On" in particular becomes a powerhouse with the fiery, intense interplay between hypnotic rhythm guitar and Doug Yule's fiery organ. "I'm Set Free," which wasn't selected for *1969 Live*, is a major bonus, with an elegiac, almost spiritual feel featuring some of Reed's best vocals on any recording.

A few songs from 1970's *Loaded* were already in the VU's set, and these performances are equal or better than the studio arrangements. That's particularly true of "New Age," which both has better, more appropriate

lyrics and, unlike the *Loaded* version, Lou Reed on lead vocals, not Doug Yule. The slow ballad approach on the two versions of "Sweet Jane" might not be better than the familiar *Loaded* track, but they're enjoyably different in meaningful ways, presenting it as a classy, reflective Reed composition rather than a raucous rocker.

On top of all this were some songs the Velvets didn't put on the four studio albums they did with Reed, though Lou put a few of them on his early solo LPs. "Sweet Bonnie Brown" might not be up to the best of his writing, but it's a terrific, slightly Chuck Berry-esque rocker that's tremendously effective as a live piece. "I Can't Stand It" gives the VU more opportunities for extended guitar pyrotechnics. "We're Gonna Have a Real Good Time Together," heard in no less than four versions (and considered by the Velvets for a single that never came out), is a marvelously taut proto-punker, highlighted by Lou's command to "watch me" during the guitar solo. "Over You," in a complete change of mood, is a tuneful sentimental outing of the kind that could have been done in the Tin Pan Alley era. "Lisa Says" is a major Reed composition that shows Lou at his most melodic and romantic, and this performance is far better than the clunkier studio outtake the VU cut in 1969 (or the tame approach he gave it on his 1972 debut solo LP).

The Complete Matrix Tapes, for all its repetitions and recycling of previously released tracks, is a vital anthology of one of the finest rock bands at their best. All significant rock acts should aspire to mix, vary, and reinvent their material as creatively as the Velvet Underground did in late 1969. For all the tinkering they did with their songs, they never lost sight of the assets at their core — their fusion of almost primitive energy with electronic dissonance, catchy guitar riffs, and the almost truth-serum-like honest emotion of Lou Reed's vocals. As lesser 1970 concert and studio recordings would prove, it was an apex so high that it might have been impossible to maintain.

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AN ECLETIC MIX

Coltrane, Dylan, Enya and Shorter albums round out your collection

WITH THE NEW YEAR UNDERway, this is a good time to consider the albums you didn't get for the holidays. There's plenty of music from different genres with their own special grooves that don't wear thin.

John Coltrane

A Love Supreme: The Complete Masters John Coltrane

(IMPULSE/VERVE)

TENOR SAXOPHONIST JOHN Coltrane had a spiritual awakening in 1957, but one could say that there were spiritual overtones in the jazz icon's previous work, including his sounds with Miles Davis as well as his solo recordings on the Atlantic, Blue Note and Prestige labels. With A Love Supreme, recorded in 1964 and released in 1965, the spiritual and secular met as never before. No mere collection of tunes, this was and is a suite to be listened to in one sitting.

Listeners initially found it fiercely moving or disquieting. But there is no right or wrong way to hear a new album. The most important thing to do is to listen.

Disc one of this outstanding triple disc set has the original album with his classic quartet-Coltrane soaring on tenor, McCoy Tyner on piano, Jimmy Garrison on bass and on drums, Elvin Jones. No mere accompanists, they had been collaborating with him for years. They had his back. Disc two includes a sextet session recorded the next day with the fiery Archie Shepp also on tenor sax and Art Davis on bass. There are over half a dozen previously unreleased tracks on the first two discs. Disc three features the quartet in a rare live performance of the suite recorded at Antibes in 1965.

All of the elements are together in the same set for the first time and are well worth hearing.

Best of The Cutting Edge: 1965-1966 Bootleg Series, Vol.12-Bob Dylan

(COLUMBIA/LEGACY)

THESE ARE BRILLIANT STUDIO recordings Bob Dylan waxed in 1965 and 1966 in New York City and Nashville. Most of these tracks, alternate takes, rehearsals, and demos are previously unreleased. Many of these songs wound up on Bringing It All Back Home, Highway 61 Revisited and Blonde On Blonde. There's something relaxing about hearing these tracks unspool. But

Enya

the loose vibe belies a frenetic, prolific period, where Dylan was brimming with new songs, touring and recording at a fast clip. It's a heady mix of full band and solo acoustic tracks, from a band version of "Mr. Tambourine Man" to "Like A Rolling Stone" done as a waltz. An up-tempo rocker, upon closer inspection turns out to be "Visions of Johanna." John Sebastian, Al Kooper, Mike Bloomfield and The Hawks (later known as The Band) turn up on various tracks, as you might expect.

Dark Sky Island-Enya

(WARNER BROS.)

VOCALIST, COMPOSER AND MULTIinstrumentalist Enya returns with sound lush and ambient, at once uplifting and meditative. Enya, lyricist Roma Ryan and producer-engineer Ricky Ryan make for quite a sonic triumvirate. One would be mistaken to label this music escapist. After all a previous album had Enya covering Pete Seeger's "How Can I Keep From Singing." It's more intriguing with each listen.

Cocksure-Laura Stevenson

(DON GIOVANNI)

THIS NATIVE NEW YORKER singer-songwriter returned to Brooklyn, NY to record this confident, often noisy mix of sweet vocals, cheeky lyrics and crunching guitars. Her fourth album is definitely a charmer. Stevenson proves indie-rock is alive and well.

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The Legendary Live Tapes: 1978-1981 -Weather Report

(COLUMBIA/LEGACY)

FACED WITH A TUGBOAT'S noisy foghorn at an outdoor concert in New York City, saxophonist Wayne Shorter, not to be outdone, extended and double-timed his solo, ending with an elongated "Hoooonnnk." It was just an example of how exciting and unpredictable a Weather Report concert could be.

In the late 1970s, when Miles Davis was in a self-imposed semi-retirement, his many sidemen were as busy as ever. Two of them, keyboardist Joe Zawinul and Wayne Shorter were leading Weather Report. They got the name from watching a forecast and quickly started pointing where music was going. Formed in the early 1970s, the group, an eclectic, fearless, ever-changing lineup soared into the 80s, dazzling audiences and sometimes confounding purist critics.

Weather Report

Two of the band's lineups are represented here. Their quartet featured versatile drummer Peter Erskine and brilliant bassist Jaco Pastorius.

Laura Stevenson

The quintet was rounded out by percussionist Robert Thomas, Jr.

Besides their spellbinding stints with Miles, Zawinul worked with Cannonball Adderly. He's the keyboardist being cheered on by a frantic audience during his funky composition "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" ("Go on, Joe! Get 'em, Joe.!"). Shorter worked with and contributed songs to Art Blakey and The Jazz Messengers. Jaco had played on several albums by Joni Mitchell during his stint in Weather Report, including The Hissing of the Summer Lawns and Mingus.

This 4-CD set is exciting music full of sonic surprises. Highlights include Jaco's atmospheric "Three Views of a Secret," an exuberant cover of Duke Ellington's "Rockin' In Rhythm" and Zawinul's own "Birdland."

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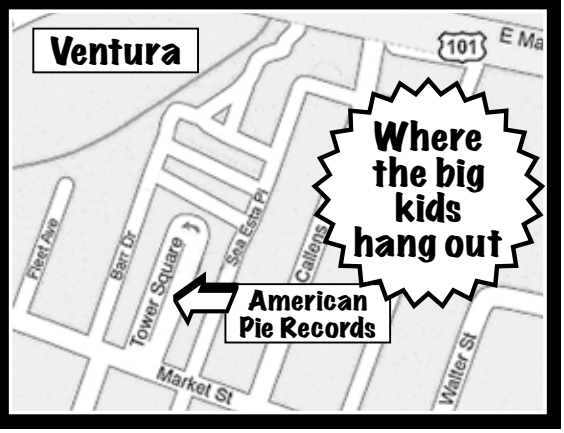

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CES 2016; Plus, Stalking the Tower for Turntables

BY DAVID THOMSON

THE TOWER AT THE VENEtian is a realistic way to get a feel for how the audio equipment presented there will sound in your living room. The emptied mini-suites are not too large and, as sound hounds sit in neat little rows of 3 or 4, the music is as clear as the bells clanging from *Dark Side of the Moon*. It's kinda cosy, too. You know your in good company as CES attracts that certain breed that opts for the trek to track the improvements to their fave audiophile brands.

Editorial space eludes us so, we are not here to critique, only to drop names of what got our attention.

As usual, digital audio components are more prevalent yet, this year, thanks to continued growth in record sales, analog and it's accessories are not going to be ignored.

Turntable arms are growing–some a long as 16 and 20 inches. I spoke with Well Tempered Lab's Bill Firebaugh. At 84, the well respected turntable designer is still as passionate, and articulate, as ever. "The longer the arm, the less arc as the cartridge swings across the record. Therefore, the cartridge gets to nestle more neatly into the groove which means less distortion."

The Royale 440 comes complete with a 16" arm and, when coupled with the smooth VTL electronics and the rich sound of DeVore Fidelity's new Gibbon X speakers, we were transfixed.

My other favorite listening experiences were in rooms with interesting similarities: They, too, had

JOHN DEVORE

VTL electronics, but with Wilson Speakers, Lyra Cartridges and, both were "tuned" by Stirling Trayle. The turntables were Allen Perkins' latest Immedia upgrade and Grand Prix's Monaco 2.0; the former, belt driven and, the latter, direct drive. All of this is quite hi-end. Listening over my budget is a real motivator for me; It gives me a goal. As any stereo is always as good as its weakest link, incremental improvement with monumental consequences can be as simple as an interconnect upgrade.

Stirling Trayle's contribution as "mechanic" means that he fine tunes each room specifically to its acoustics. Most importantly, I think, he aligns the cartridge and the arm on the turntable so as to calibrate the ease of which they effortlessly deliver the music. The fact that Bea Manley, at VTL, and he collaborate is a statement to Stirling's superior, sonic sensibility.

Then, there was the never-in-my-lifetime experience: The Lamm maxi-suite.

Cofounder Vladimir Lamm is a Russian audio-physicist who doesn't compromise with either components or cost. To own the system presented this year, let's just say that you'd need Paul McCartney's money. The music presented plays pretty seamlessly between digital and analog as, every year, the same octogenarian DJ shuffles back and forth, silently, along the long wall of electronics, to switch between LP and, most recently, DSD. There is no incredible, earth shattering, distinction between the 2 formats. The transparency of the equipment soon allows us to be transported by the music; jazz, classical, whatever, all extraordinary examples of audio's reproduction abilities. Pavarotti, vibrant and vivid, filled the vast room. At the end, an aficionado, sat front row and center, suddenly, leapt ecstatically into the air and yelled, "It's just like being at the Met!" It's probably as close as I'm going to get, I mused. Our DJ proceeded, nonchalantly, with the program. "Who is that ambling man?" I inquired. "That's Vladimir."

Back to earth: Elac's Andrew Jones has done it again. His sweet and seductive speakers always attract standing room only crowds. This year his, new, two way cube has us wondering, where's the subwoofer? At about 8" square, this bombshell blasts, even booms, music into the room via a one piece component with surprising ease. Highs, midrange, bass, it's all there and, you can't help wonder how he delivers it for under 500 bucks.

Another sign of the LP's resurgence? There were more record cleaning machines this year. One that was exceptionally simple to use was the Nessie Vinylmaster debuted by RutherfordAudio.com.

MusicalSurroundings.com and SweetVinyl.com have combined record ripping with click and pop removal in one elementary swoop. And, the clicks are eliminated with no loss in resolution. Plus, SweetVinyl's onboard software identifies virtually all songs, artists, lips, etc., and applies the metadata, automatically–a real time saver when archiving vinyl transfers.

Manley Labs new, tube headphone amp packing them in, too. A simple, elegant, portable design that will dock your device of choice and really give those audio files chance to breath. It couples with all components so, now, you can crank that LP without worry about the neighbors.

We can't talk about it all as space robs us again. But, not to worry, T.H.E. Show, Newport Beach is in June. You can catch up there.

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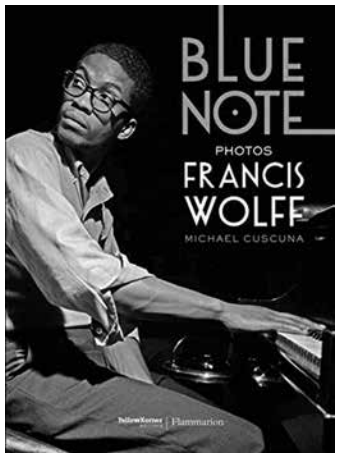
The Look of Blue Note

BY ARMAND LEWIS



IT'S RARE TO SEE WHAT GOES on behind the scenes in any artistic creation. Even more elusive is the opportunity to see the inner workings of an entire company throughout its most creative decades. While it was routine for photographs to be taken at recording sessions for use on LP jackets, there was only one record label in the world to systematically document it's musicians at work as they created much of their best music.

Blue Note Records was fortunate to have a master photographer as one of its owners. Francis Wolff was a boyhood friend of label founder Alfred Lion when the two were growing up in Berlin. Wolff grew up to be a photographer before World War II, but in 1939 as the Nazi threat intensified, he immigrated to New York where his friend had recently started what would become the greatest jazz label in history.

Out of his passion for photography, when Francis Wolff joined Blue Note he started photographing the recording sessions that Lion produced. With the advent of the LP and the need for something to put on the cover, this turned into a business necessity. Wolff would continue to photograph all Blue Note recording dates until 1967. The photos he took during these historic sessions reveal not only the intensity of their subjects, but also the eye of a visual artist who had a sense of composition, lighting and spontaneity like few others.

After Alfred Lion retired from Blue Note in 1967, Wolff took over as producer and label chief. As he was now supervising sessions, this allowed less time for photography. All the photographs he took ended up with Lion, who kept them as souvenirs of his career. Nobody but Lion knew the photos existed until the mid 1980s, when he allowed Mosaic Records access to them for their re-issue sets of Blue Note material.

Flammarion Publishing has just released the third book of *Blue Note Photos* by Francis Wolff, which is compiled by Blue Note and Mosaic Records producer Michael Cuscuna (ISBN 10-2080202208). Like its predecessor volumes, it will amaze anyone who has ever been exposed to the intense, evocative covers of the classic Blue Note albums from the 1950s and 1960s.

These are no mere snapshots. Wolff's images capture their subjects in moments of intense concentration, playful relaxation, and sometimes sheer exuberance at what they were creating. There are some portrait style photos, but the vast majority are truly action shots. Put on your favorite Hank Mobley or Lee Morgan LP while you thumb through the book, and you're practically there in the studio with them.

Selected from an archive of

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 42

some thirty thousand images, the book presents one hundred and fifty photos — some of which have never appeared anywhere before now. All the familiar Blue Note stars are here as well as sidemen who didn't get their pictures on the album covers. Some familiar images that were used for album covers are represented, but even on the original LPs, they never appeared with such clarity. Naturally, the reader will recognize the LP cover shots, but

Selected from an archive of some thirty thousand images, the book presents one hundred and fifty photos — some of which have never appeared anywhere before now.

presented here in their original state, one can see how even minor alterations in editing the photos for the album covers change the mood of a photo — giving it real impact. The photo captions for each image also reference the recording date and album session, which can make looking at the book while listening to the corresponding album almost a cinematic experience.

Though Francis Wolff would not emerge from behind the shadows of this great company until many years after his death, his creative contribution was truly immense. Both this new volume and the earlier books belong in the libraries of anyone interested in jazz or photography.

Armand Lewis buys and sells rare Jazz LPs worldwide. He can be reached at mrbluenote@peoplepc.com

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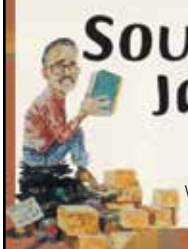

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Calendar listings are free and printed on a space available basis. Unso-licited materials cannot be returned. Please contact conventions to verify the information! Send your calendar listings to ***Record Collector News***: jim@recordcollectornews.com

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 7

Pasadena, CA. Pasadena City College Flea Market and Record Swap. 1570 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. 8am-3pm. Free admission. Parking $2

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 13

Countryside IL. Southwest Chicago Record and CD Show. 6201 Joliet Road, $3. 10am-4pm. $3 847-409-9656

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 14

Newark, CA Newark Record Swap Meet. Newark Pavilion 6430 Thornton. $3.50 7am-1pm. 408-263-5127

Chicago, IL. Funk Trunk Records presents Rogers Park Music Swap. Red Line Tap 7006 N. Glenwood Ave. Free. 12pm-6pm. 734-604-1666

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 20

New Orleans, LA. Record Raid at the New Orleans Jazz Market 1436 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd. Free 10am – 5pm. 504-4444-2442

New York City, NY. The New York City Record and CD Show 440 W. 57th Street. $6. 10am-4pm. 973-209-6067

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 21

Claremont, CA KSPC CD and Record Show. Smith Campus Center Ballroom 170 E. 6th St. $2. 10am – 4pm.

Eugene, OR. The 2016 Eugene Record Show. Eugene Hilton, 66 East 6th St. $3. 10am-5pm. 503-475-7377

The Greater Orange County Record Show is closed this February, but reopens in March after a remodel

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 28

NO GREATER ORANGE COUNTY RECRD SHOW due to remodeling. See you the last Sunday in March.

SATURDAY MARCH 5

Longview, WA. Kelso-Longview Record Show. 1338 Commerce Street. $3. 4-8pm. 360-751-33433

Port Townsend, WA. Port Townsend Record Show. 209 Monroe St. Free. 11am-5pm. 360-774-2171

SUNDAY MARCH 6

Pasadena, CA. Pasadena City College Flea Market and Record Swap. 1570 E Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. 8am-3pm. Free admission. Parking $2

Palatine, IL. NW Chicago CD and Record Show. Holiday Inn Express 1550 Dundee Road. $3. 10am – 4pm. 847-409-9656

St. Louis, MO. St. Louis Record Collectors Show. 4690 Lansdowne. $3. 10am-3:30pm. 314-550-1814

SATURDAY MARCH 19

Orland Park, IL. Record Collectors Show. 8800 W. 159th St. $3. 9am-3pm. 773-585-6254

New York City, NY. The New York City Record and CD Show 440 W. 57th St. $6. 10am-4pm. 973-209-6067

Grants Pass, OR. 11th Annual Grants Pass Record Show. 1451 Redwood Highway. $2. 9am-4pm. 541-245-6758

SUNDAY MARCH 20

Hillside, IL. Chicagoland Record Collectors Show. 4400 Frontage Rd. $3. 9am-4pm. 630-898-1533

Wilkes-Barre, PA. The NY – Penn Record and CD Fair. 1073 Route 315. Free. 10am-5pm. 607-648-4997

SUNDAY MARCH 27

Buena Park, CA Greater Orange County Record Show. UFCW Union Hall – 8530 Stanton Ave. $3. 10am-3pm. 626-665-4448

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